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[International Students' Lived Experiences: A Review of Literature \(https://source.sheridancollege.ca/cgei_resources/\)](https://source.sheridancollege.ca/cgei_resources/)
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Authors

Amira El Masri, Sheridan College (https://source.sheridancollege.ca/do/search/?q=bp_author_id%3A%22159a3448-95d2-42bb-b44b-b5733433a25c%22%20OR%20%28author%3A%22Amira%20El%20Masri%22%20AND%20-bp_author_id%3A%5B%2A%20TO%20%2A%5D%29&start=0&context=7240969) Follow (<https://network.bepress.com/api/follow/subscribe?user=Mzg2NzA5M2E1ZmM2YjE5NQ%3D%3D&institution=MGI0YmNkNzQyMjI3N2UxOQ%3D%3D&format=html>)

Noah Khan, Sheridan College (https://source.sheridancollege.ca/do/search/?q=bp_author_id%3A%2262fd50fa-d5b3-40fd-aa45-d381761a3824%22%20OR%20%28author%3A%22Noah%20Khan%22%20AND%20-bp_author_id%3A%5B%2A%20TO%20%2A%5D%29&start=0&context=7240969) Follow (<https://network.bepress.com/api/follow/subscribe?user=ZjY0NGVhMWU4NDc0ZDY1YQ%3D%3D&institution=MGI0YmNkNzQyMjI3N2UxOQ%3D%3D&format=html>)

Document Type

Literature Review

Publication Date

1-2022

Keywords

international students, international post-secondary students, international students and Canada, lived experiences, Canadian educational institutions, Ontario, Region of Peel

Executive Summary

As international student populations continue to climb in Canada, there is a heavy impetus for the lived experiences of international students to be examined in order to better inform the infrastructure meant to support them throughout their journey in Canada. International students arrive from various locations with various experiences and multiple stakeholders are tasked with supporting their transition to Canada. These stakeholders are typically identified as educational institutions and relevant governmental bodies; however, researchers have identified the roles of far wider networks including employers, community organizations, healthcare workers, social welfare groups, and many more.

In an effort to unify these stakeholders and synergize their strengths to support international students, the Improving International Post-Secondary Student Experience Advisory Roundtable was struck to respond to ongoing and growing concerns about postsecondary international students' lived experiences in the city of Brampton and broader region of Peel. This report provides a comprehensive review of academic literature that examines international students' experiences in Canada, tying in media stories and meeting minutes within the Peel context when applicable to supplement the lack of academic literature concerning the Peel context.

This study is informed by the following research questions:

1. What does the literature tell us about the lived experiences of postsecondary international students in Canada before, during, and after their period of study?
2. What recommendations has the literature proposed to address the challenges international students face before, during, and after their period of study?

The review is placed within the global, Canadian, and Peel context. Globally, international student numbers continue to soar with three apparent motives for recruiting international students: economic motivation, immigration motivation, and geopolitical strategies. Canada takes up these three motives in stride and has successfully become a world leader in international education, with government policy acting as a strong lever to increase the international student population. Canada has undergone a series of immigration policy changes that position international education as a pipeline to immigration in the pursuit of retaining international students who are seen as 'ideal immigrants' due to their Canadian credentials and acculturation period (Trilokekar & El Masri, 2016; 2017). Within Ontario, which has the highest international student population of the provinces, Peel Region is home to 80 postsecondary Designated Learning Institution campuses, which can admit international students. However, only thirteen of these institutions offer programs that allow international students to be eligible for the Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP), which is integral to successful immigration.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine current research pertaining to the lived experiences of international postsecondary students in Canada. While academic literature comprises the bulk of the literature review, governmental, or 'grey,' literature was also reviewed to supplement key statistics not found in the academic literature concerning Peel. To ensure relevancy and reflection of major policy changes, literature dated before 2010 was not considered. Two gaps in the existing literature influenced the themes emerging in this report. First, there is very limited literature that examines international students' experiences in the private sector (private colleges and public-private partnerships). Second, there are less than a handful of studies that focus on the Peel context. To address this and to ensure that this report captures the Brampton/Peel-specific experiences, popular sources such as news stories and meeting minutes were included in subsections within the review. A total of 83 relevant sources were reviewed and thematically organized into categories following the journey of international students: pre-arrival; experiences during postsecondary education; and transition into the labour market.

Faculty

The Centre for Global Education and Internationalization (CGEI)

Version

Publisher's version

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SOURCE Citation

El Masri, Amira and Khan, Noah, "International Students' Lived Experiences: A Review of Literature" (2022). *CGEI Resources and Reports*. 1. https://source.sheridancollege.ca/cgei_resources/1

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